

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION
STATEMENT ON HB 7155
AN ACT CONCERNING A PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS**

This legislation authorizes professional societies and organizations to establish programs for the treatment of impaired health care professionals. The assistance programs created would be monitored by the Department of Public Health but would enjoy strong confidentiality provisions.

The Freedom of Information Commission understands the need for confidentiality in the early stages of these difficult situations to encourage those health care professionals who need help to seek it.

The Commission, however, is concerned that the legislation as proposed seeks to keep this information confidential by assistance programs and the Department of Public Health indefinitely. The Department of Public Health in its sole discretion would decide if any of this information becomes available for public inspection.

The Commission would ask the General Assembly to consider clarifying the language in the legislation to set clear guidelines, similar to those set forth in §20-13e and §19a-14(d), as to when this confidential information would be available to the public. The privacy of these impaired health care professionals must be properly balanced with the right of the public to be informed when making decisions about their healthcare providers.

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